

The South Carolina Forest Steward

February 2012



Welcome to the February 2012 edition of the South Carolina Forest Steward. This issue will provide you with information on cost share programs, practicing forestry in tough times, the South Carolina Forestry Association annual meeting, laurel wilt and capital gains on your timber sale. We also will be saying goodbye to a long-time Extension employee. Included are dates for some upcoming meetings in the state. As we get closer to spring, we know you will be ready to get into the woods!

We hope you will take some time out of your busy schedules to interact with each other at one of the many landowner association meetings planned at the county level. These meetings are great opportunities to learn from your neighbors as well as to make contacts with professionals who can assist you. Check out the list of county landowner associations and find one near you. Note the 7th Annual Lexington County Forestry Association Annual Meeting held in Batesburg-Leesville in mid-March. This is a great opportunity to meet other landowners and hear from experts on forest management. We also have a landowner field day and a landowner workshop planned in May. These events are a joint effort between Clemson Extension and the South Carolina Tree Farm Committee. I hope to see you out there for an educational day!

We have completed the move to electronic format for the Forest Steward. The bonus of moving to electronic format is that we no longer have to worry about space! With that said, if you have any suggestions for content, please send us an email. We want to serve you!

Clemson Forestry and Natural Resources Extension has also moved into the world of Facebook and Twitter! Our intent with this move is to find another way to reach the public. Our posts on Facebook are a way to bring news of all kinds to those interested in forestry and natural resources. We would love to have you join us! Go to <http://www.facebook.com/fnrcl Clemson>. As the days start getting warmer, we hope you are enjoying the change in temperature and taking the time to enjoy the glory of our South Carolina forests.

*Tamara Cushing, Extension Forestry Specialist, Clemson University
Bob Franklin, Extension Forester, Colleton County
Co-Editors*

Farm Bill Programs Offer Conservation Technical and Financial Assistance

With the mission of "Helping People Help the Land," the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in South Carolina provides products and services that enable people to be good stewards of soil, water, and related natural resources on non-Federal lands. As a result of NRCS' technical and financial assistance, land managers and communities take a comprehensive approach to the use and protection of natural resources in rural, suburban, urban, and developing areas.

NRCS accepts applications for financial assistance on a continuous basis throughout the year. Currently, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) has two ranking periods for the Organic, On-Farm Energy and Seasonal High Tunnel initiatives, ending

on March 30 and June 1, 2012. At the end of these ranking periods, NRCS will rank all submitted proposals for funding consideration.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program that supports production agriculture and environmental quality as compatible goals. Through EQIP, farmers may receive financial and technical help with structural and management conservation practices on agricultural land. You can find out more by visiting <http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/eqip2012.html>.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) assists landowners who want to improve wildlife habitat or restore natural ecosystems on their land. The program helps landowners develop habitat for upland wildlife, threatened and endangered species, fish, and other wildlife in South Carolina. The bobwhite quail, wintering waterfowl and shorebird habitat, invasive

plant species, and threatened and endangered plant and animal species have been identified as the priority conservation concerns in the state.

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) is offered through continuous sign-ups with announced cut-off dates for ranking periods. The program provides many conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancement and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change. The program offers payments to producers who maintain a high level of conservation on their land and who agree to adopt higher levels of stewardship. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland and nonindustrial forestland.

For more information about these programs or to learn more about NRCS, visit <http://www.sc.nrcs.usda.gov>. USDA is an equal opportunity employer and provider. ✱

USDA Announces CRP General Sign-up

Landowners and Producers Will Have 4-Week Window Beginning in March to Enroll

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1, 2012—Acting Under Secretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services (FFAS) Michael Scuse announced today that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will conduct a four-week Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) general signup, beginning on March 12 and ending on April 6. CRP has a 25-year legacy of successfully protecting the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

"It is USDA's goal to ensure that we use CRP to address our most critical resource issues," said Scuse. "CRP is an important program for protecting our

Support the Forest Stewardship Program

Dear Landowner,

Now is the time to thank your forester for all their hard work and show your support for their help in the future. Without America's foresters, our nation's 11 million family forest owners would not be the great forest stewards we are today. And without foresters, the American Tree Farm System would not be able to provide you with the on-the-ground tools you need to keep your forests healthy now and for the future.

Unfortunately, there's no guarantee that you, your children, or your grandchildren will continue to have access to a forester's expertise. President Obama's budget proposes to reduce the USFS Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) by almost 14 percent. The FSP provides resources to every state forestry agency to support a network of trusted and reliable service foresters, and it might not be around in the future.

Say "thank you" to your forester today: sign our letter (<http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/forest-stewardship/>) in support of the Forest Stewardship Program.

With these program reductions, fewer family forest owners will have access to a forester for on-the-ground assistance. These foresters provide valuable technical advice as well as help forest owners write management plans to guide the future management of their land.

The American Tree Farm System, in partnership with the National Association of State Foresters, is working to keep these foresters around, and we need your help to show our nation's decision-makers that foresters are a critical tool to keep your forest healthy and working. There is no one more suited to carry this message to Congress than you.

Say thank you to your forester today by signing this letter in support of the Forest Stewardship Program. We're hoping to gather 500 signatures by March 14, when 60 Tree Farmers from across the country will deliver this letter to decision-makers in-person. So please share this with your fellow forest owners who also see the incredible value that foresters provide.

The best way to support your forester is to help ensure they can keep doing what they do best.

Thanks for all your support,

Christine Cadigan
Manager, Public Affairs
American Forest Foundation
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most environmentally sensitive lands from erosion and sedimentation, and for ensuring the sustainability of our groundwater, lakes, rivers, ponds and streams. As always, we expect strong competition to enroll acres into CRP, and we urge interested producers to maximize their environmental benefits and to make cost-effective offers.”

CRP is a voluntary program available to agricultural producers to help them use environmentally sensitive land for conservation benefits. Producers enrolled in CRP plant long-term, resource-conserving covers to improve the quality of water, control soil erosion and develop wildlife habitat. In return, USDA provides participants with rental payments and cost-share assistance. Contract duration is between 10 and 15 years. Producers with expiring contracts and producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP. Producers also are encouraged to look into CRP’s other enrollment opportunities offered on a continuous, non-competitive, signup basis.

Currently, about 30 million acres are enrolled in CRP; and contracts on an estimated 6.5 million acres will expire on Sept. 30, 2012.

Offers for CRP contracts are ranked according to the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI). USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) collects data for each of the EBI factors based on the relative environmental benefits for the land offered. Each eligible offer is ranked in comparison to all other offers and selections made from that ranking. FSA uses the following EBI factors to assess the environmental benefits for the land offered:

- Wildlife habitat benefits resulting from covers on contract acreage;
- Water quality benefits from reduced erosion, runoff and leaching;
- On-farm benefits from reduced erosion;
- Benefits that will likely endure beyond the contract period;
- Air quality benefits from reduced wind erosion; and
- Cost.

Over the past 25 years, farmers, ranchers, conservationists, hunters, fishermen and other outdoor enthusiasts have made CRP the largest and one of the most important in USDA’s conservation portfolio. CRP continues to make major contributions to national efforts to improve water and air quality, prevent soil erosion by protecting the most sensitive

areas including those prone to flash flooding and runoff. At the same time, CRP has helped increase populations of pheasants, quail, ducks, and other rare species, like the sage grouse, the lesser prairie chicken, and others. Highlights of CRP include:

- CRP has restored more than two million acres of wetlands and two million acres of riparian buffers;
- Each year, CRP keeps more than 600 million pounds of nitrogen and more than 100 million pounds of phosphorous from flowing into our nation’s streams, rivers, and lakes.
- CRP provides \$1.8 billion annually to landowners—dollars that make their way into local economies, supporting small businesses and creating jobs; and
- CRP is the largest private lands carbon sequestration program in the country. By placing vulnerable cropland into conservation, CRP sequesters carbon in plants and soil, and reduces both fuel and fertilizer usage. In 2010, CRP resulted in carbon sequestration equal to taking almost 10 million cars off the road.

In 2011, USDA enrolled a record number of acres of private working lands in conservation programs, working with more than 500,000 farmers and ranchers to implement conservation practices that clean the air we breathe, filter the water we drink, and prevent soil erosion. Moreover, the Obama Administration, with Agriculture Secretary Vilsack’s leadership, has worked tirelessly to strengthen rural America, implement the Farm Bill, maintain a strong farm safety net, and create opportunities for America’s farmers and ranchers. U.S. agriculture is currently experiencing one of its most productive periods in American history thanks to the productivity, resiliency, and resourcefulness of our producers.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>. ✱

Laurel Wilt Spreads Through Coastal South Carolina

Ben Powell, Area Natural Resources Agent, Horry County

By now most forest landowners in South Carolina have at least heard of the laurel wilt disease that is killing red bay trees along South Carolina’s coast. If not, then here is a brief synopsis of the situation.

Laurel Wilt (*Raffaelea lauricola*) is a fungal disease that affects the tissues of plants in the Laurel family (*Lauraceae*) and is causing the widespread death of



Tree damaged by laurel wilt. Photo by Albert (Bud) Mayfield, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org

red bay trees in coastal counties of South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. The disease has drawn a lot of attention in recent years because it is spreading rapidly, it usually results in the death of the infected tree, and it is leading to very high mortality rates (90% or greater) where it has been found.

Although the red bay (*Persea borbonia*) is not considered to be of great economic importance to South Carolina, it is no doubt ecologically and culturally important. The red bay is a wetlands indicator species. It thrives in the moist bottoms along rivers and streams and in isolated depressions such as Carolina bays. It also can be found occasionally in upland areas. Historically, the aromatic leaves have been used as a substitute for bay leaf, a common spice used from the European bay laurel. The bright red wood has been used in small quantities as a finishing accent for furniture and inlays, but the irregular growth habit of this understory tree makes it unsuitable for most saw wood applications. Red bay is an important wildlife food source, and several reports indicate its importance to deer, turkey, quail, several song birds, and black bear. The red bay also is an important host for the spicebush swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio troilus*) and its sister species, the laurel swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio palamedes*). Prevalence of these two butterflies, at least in the Coastal Plain, hinges on availability of red bay hosts.

Laurel wilt is a peculiar disease because of the way it is transmitted from tree to tree. It's only known method of transmission is by a tiny insect known as the red bay ambrosia beetle, *Xyleborus glabratus* (Coleoptera: Curculionidae: Scolytinae). This nefarious little beetle

is a recent introduction from southeast Asia. It is believed to have been introduced in wooden shipping crates. This beetle holds a strong relationship with the laurel wilt fungus. The female beetles have specialized sacs next to their mouthparts which are designed specifically to carry spores of the laurel wilt fungus.



Red bay ambrosia beetle. Photo by Michael C. Thomas, Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Bugwood.org

The infection of the host tree appears to be of mutual benefit to both the disease and the beetle. Obviously, the fungus benefits because the beetle carries it to new trees. The beetle also benefits because of the way the disease affects tissues of the tree. The main natural defense that trees have against wood-boring insects is their sap flow. When trees are healthy, they typically can ward off boring insects by "drowning" them in their galleries. Red bays that are infected with laurel wilt are not able to defend themselves from new attacks because the disease compromises sap flow.

Once a suitable host is found, in this case a healthy red bay tree, the beetles attempt to bore into the large branches or mainstem of the tree. These attacks are often unsuccessful at establishing breeding galleries but they usually result in the inoculation of the tree with the disease. Over the next few weeks, the disease spreads through the tree, which begins to show symptoms. At first, sections of the crown begin to wilt and discolor, and leaves turn reddish to purple.

Once this occurs, death is imminent and usually occurs within 2 to 3 months. Eventually all leaves wilt and turn brown but usually remain attached to the tree, and inspection of the sapwood reveals severe dark black streaking running along the grain of the wood. This streaking is the easiest way to diagnose the disease. Meanwhile, the weakened tree



Redbay trunk with bark removed exposing sapwood with typical black staining caused by laurel wilt. Photo by Ronald F. Billings, Texas Forest Service, Bugwood.org

becomes more susceptible to attack from the beetle. These new attacks sometimes produce small, inch-long “dowels” or “toothpicks” of boring dust that protrude from the tree. After the beetles have successfully reproduced and larvae have matured, the cycle begins again with dispersing females looking for new hosts. In coastal South Carolina, the red bay ambrosia beetle appears to complete its life cycle in 50 to 60 days, and there are multiple overlapping generations each year, which makes managing this pest much more difficult.

While red bay trees seem to be the most affected tree at present, it is not the only member of the Laurel family that is contracting the disease. At present laurel wilt has been confirmed to infect Swampbay (*Persea palustris*), Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*), Pondspice (*Litsea aestivalis*), Pondberry (*Lindera melissifolia*), Camphor (*Cinnamomum camphora*), and Avacado (*Persea americana*), although the mortality rates of these species are not yet understood. Their mortality rates will likely vary, because susceptibility to the disease depends on if the plant 1) is attractive to the red bay ambrosia beetle, 2) is a suitable breeding host for the beetle, and 3) is geographically isolated from other susceptible species. At present, laurel wilt seems to be restricted to the Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Plains where red bays occur naturally, but there are records of the red bay ambrosia beetle attacking Sassafras trees that are geographically distant from infected red bays. This means that there is potential for laurel wilt to spread into the piedmont via sassafras populations, but it is unknown how likely this is to occur.

Each year since their introduction, the red bay ambrosia beetle and laurel wilt have spread. The beetle was first detected in a trap in Port Wentworth, Georgia in 2002. By 2004, laurel wilt had established in wild populations of red bays in Jasper and Beaufort Counties in South Carolina and Chatham County in Georgia. In the following years movement of the disease trended more to the south and now extends all

the way to the tip of Florida with a confirmation of the disease in Miami, Florida in 2011. The disease also has moved northward extending as far as Horry County by 2009. With a recent announcement in January 2012 that laurel wilt has been confirmed in Georgetown County, the disease has been confirmed in all of South Carolina’s coastal counties.

For staff that work at the Department of Natural Resources facility at Fort Johnson in Charleston County, laurel wilt is of special concern. The property hosts the state champion red bay, a 200 year-old behemoth that is 48 feet tall and has a trunk two feet in diameter. Since laurel wilt was detected in Charleston County in 2009 and affected trees have been observed only a few hundred yards from the champion, efforts such as injections of systemic fungicides have been underway to protect this prized tree.

Although the situation seems bleak for the red bay, an iconic member of woodlands in South Carolina’s Coastal Plain, there may be a glimmer of hope that the tree will not meet its final extinction. It appears that very young trees, even in heavily infected areas, are not suffering from the disease. This seems to be due to the reproductive preference of the female beetles. The red bay ambrosia beetle females prefer to bore into larger, more established trees. They do not appear to attack trees with stems smaller than one inch in diameter. While it is disheartening to know that we possibly will lose most if not all of the mature red bays in our forests today, there seems to be a good chance that another generation of trees is here to fill their place, but will these trees be able to survive to reproductive maturity to continue the red bay lineage. That answer remains to be determined.

At present, there is a collaborative effort to manage this disease and its insect vector. This effort is detailed in the *Recovery Plan for Laurel Wilt on Red Bay and Other Forest Species*, a document produced under the directive of the National Plant Disease Recovery

Forest Stewardship Program



The Forest Stewardship Program (FSP) is a FREE technical service program designed to encourage multiple resource management on private non-industrial forestlands. FSP encourages wise use of all forest-related activities including timber management, wildlife habitat management, recreation, aesthetics, grazing, and soil and water conservation. WHO IS ELIGIBLE: Private landowners who own more than 10 acres, with at least 5 acres of the tract in forestland. SERVICES PROVIDED: Free technical assistance from a professional forester and wildlife biologist, a 10 year written management plan, subscription to the South Carolina Forest Stewards newsletter, and recognition as a Stewardship Forest landowner.

CONTACT: The SC Forestry Commission Forest Stewardship Coordinator, Scott Phillips, at (803) 896-8844; Lynn Leclair, PeeDee Region Stewardship Forester at (843) 662-5571; Vaughan Spearman, Coastal Region Stewardship Forester at (843) 538-3708; Jamie Jones, Piedmont Region Stewardship Forester at (803) 276-0205 or your local South Carolina Forestry Commission area office.

System which is managed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and sponsored by the American Phytopathological Society. Details of the plan to manage laurel wilt and the red bay ambrosia beetle can be found at the Agricultural Research Service website, <http://www.ars.usda.gov/SP2UserFiles/Place/00000000/opmp/ForestLaurelWilt100107.pdf>.



Happenings at the 43rd South Carolina Forestry Association Annual Meeting

By Tom Brant, Area FNR Agent, McCormick County

This past November I was given the opportunity to attend the South Carolina Forestry Association annual meeting. I have always enjoyed these meetings and have gone every year or two since 1990. The themes and topics for the meetings are appropriate for the present conditions the forestry community and industry find themselves in at the time they are held. This year was no different, with the overall theme being a "View of the Future of Forestry." Having endured the poor economy for the past few years, forest management practices and forestry related industries have gone through many changes and the meeting presenters provided those attending their prospects for the future.

Dr. Lynn Michaelis, Senior Economist with Resource Information Systems Inc. started his presentation with the sobering statement that housing is in a depression with a 70% drop in activity. It's not tight monetary policy but excesses in governmental policy and programs that have led to production exceeding demand for housing. Mill capacity is too great for the housing demand leading to prices being at breakeven levels throughout the industry. Dr. Michaelis sees the economy remaining sluggish through 2013 with key activities that will lead to recovery being consumer

Working Forest Field Tour

The SC Tree Farm Committee and Upstate Forestry Association will host a program for landowners on May 26, 2012 at the Tree Farm of John and Carolyn Brown, 1006 Moody Bridge Road, Cleveland, SC. The Browns will discuss management activities and unique aspects of their farm which is located under Caesars Head on the South Saluda River. The farm consists of 130 acres of rich river bottoms and 570 acres of mountain terrain.

Program topics will include: growing oyster and shitake mushrooms; a bear-proof bee bus; operational band saw mill; nuisance animal activity and control of bear, wild hog and coyote; forest management on hillsides; and bottom land planning for tulip popular, cherry bark oak, emerald ash, mast controlled pollinated loblolly pine, varietal (clone) loblolly pine, and walnut.

To make a reservation, contact Joan Riddle at jrdld@clemson.edu or 864/232-4431, Ext. 116.

Note: attendees should bring their own chair (stadium/lawn) since chairs will not be provided. Program orientation will last one hour.

For additional information, contact Walt McPhail at 864/288-7618 or treevetsc@aol.com.

spending, business investment, and actions of state and local governments. As he sees it, the greatest risks to recovery are the European debt crisis and the political boondoggle in DC. With around 1.8 million vacant housing units in inventory nationwide to be moved before new construction can pick up, it will be 2-3 more years before a sustainable recovery for the lumber and timber markets can occur.

Mac Lupold of Lupold Consulting then brought the participants' attention to a little noticed fact that may have great consequences in the future of our

Upcoming Events

March 13, 2012	Seventh Annual Lexington County Forestry Association Meeting. For more information, visit our web site at http://www.clemson.edu/extension/natural_resources/forestry .
March 20, 2012	GIS/GPS Applications for Foresters. Clemson University Campus. For more information, visit http://www.clemson.edu/fnrce .
May 5, 2012	Tree Farm Landowner Conference. Edisto Research & Education Center, Blackville, SC. For more information, contact Bob Franklin at rmfrnkl@clemson.edu .
May 21-23, 2012	Wildlife Habitat Considerations in Managed Forests. Madren Conference Center at Clemson University. For more information, visit http://www.clemson.edu/fnrce .
June 20, 2012	Pine Straw Production. Florence, SC. For more information, visit http://www.clemson.edu/fnrce .

wood supply in South Carolina. Since the mid-2000s and through this economic downturn the rate of final harvests and replanting has diminished greatly. Current owners keep thinning stands or just holding their timber versus regenerating the stands. According to 2005 State Forest Inventory Analysis data, growth equaled removals in the 6-8 inch pulpwood class. With expansion in demand for the pulpwood size class, we are currently cutting 200 million tons of sawtimber class material to fill the lack of pulpwood. This lack of 6-8 inch class will drive pulpwood users to continue to meet supply needs by going in to the 10-12 inch class and using it for pulp. The absence of final harvesting and regeneration is leading to an imbalance in the age class distribution which will cause removals to exceed growth.

George Barrett, Editor, Hardwood Review discussed hardwood market activity since half of the timber growing in South Carolina is in hardwoods. It has been a rough 5 years for the US hardwood industry and markets with a 53% drop in production, over half a million jobs lost and 200 plant closings. But those that have weathered the storm are seeing an increase in activity. The export market was stable throughout this time and other indicators are showing improvement including two manufacturers that moved overseas returning to the US. The remaining manufacturers have better determined their place in the market and have come out stronger in the end. Mr. Barrett is optimistic that a recovery has started and sees positives for the industry's future.

Wrapping up the morning was Marshall Thomas, President of F&W Forestry, on where we go from here. With a 60 year low in timber prices, sawtimber never selling lower than this, land values starting to drop and planting less than a million acres per year, forestry is in hard times. For the owners of over two-thirds of the forestland in South Carolina there is light on the horizon. New uses for wood in energy production of ethanol and pellets, a strong export market and requirements for sustainably grown certified wood bode well for the future demand for wood. With reforestation cost still about the same as in 1988, forest management remains an economical investment. Mr. Thomas also noted the improvement in trend stumpage prices and increase in mill demands as signs to be optimistic. His advice on how to weather the impacts of this terrible market is to acquire sound management advice and make thoughtful informed decisions.

This is just a portion of the material covered that morning. The afternoon was filled with information

on the genetically improved timber we are growing and the changes in wood properties of this timber. Also, the adjustment in silvicultural techniques needed to manage this improved timber and updates to the southern yellow pine structural design values. There's always a lot of information available and knowledgeable people to discuss questions with at this annual meeting. So if you are interested in what the latest is in the world of forestry, register and attend the 44th SCFA Annual meeting in North Charleston, October 31 - November 2, 2012. I hope to see you there. ✱

Recession Forest Management

Robert M. Franklin, Area Forestry & Wildlife Extension Agent, Colleton County

There's no question that the past four years have brought on hard times for many in the state. The region has been hard hit with plant closings and job layoffs. For those who were laid-off, bills still need to be paid and food put on the table. Those out of a job but who own timberland are slightly more fortunate. They can sell timber to generate income. However, they may be forced to sell in the worst timber market in memory, with standing timber prices going for around half of what it did before the housing market crashed.

When selling in a depressed market, financially-distressed buyers should make every effort to get top dollar for their timber. Probably the best way to do this is to retain the services of a duly licensed, registered, consulting forester. Consulting foresters generate a good portion of their income by selling timber for clients. They know the local timber market and can get top dollar for timber in a weak, as well as strong market. If finances are such that require you to sell your timber, retain the services of a consulting forester. They typically charge a percent commission for handling a timber sale and will easily net the landowner more money than if the landowner tried to sell the timber themselves. In studies done throughout the South, consulting foresters typically netted landowners around 30% more. Both local offices of the Clemson Extension Service and the South Carolina Forestry Commission have lists of consulting foresters that work locally. Get a list and contact them. Pick one that you're comfortable working with. They will help you in the marketing of your timber and the management of your forestland.

Also important for many small landowners is what to do after harvest. Regardless of how financially strapped you are, consider planning for regeneration

or reforestation after the timber harvest. Reserve some of the money generated for regeneration. Properly managed, small tracts of timber can provide periodic income! The key is planning and management!

After a timber harvest, it's not difficult to do the regeneration work yourself. The key is to plan ahead! If you plan on doing no land preparation, find a logger who has access to a fuel wood operation. Have them chip all the logging slash and underbrush after the harvest. This will leave the site better prepared for planting.

When planting, make it a family affair. It is indeed a daunting task for one person to plant 20-40 acres, but you can be surprised what a family of three or more can do with a little teamwork. All family members have to realize is they are not just planting trees, they are making an investment in their future. Even with today's depressed prices, a well-stocked and properly managed 40-acre pine stand can yield \$300-\$400 per acre at a 1st thinning between 13-16 years of age and a similar amount six-seven years later in a 2nd thinning. At final harvest between ages 27-30, the 40-acre tract could easily bring in \$50,000-\$60,000. With this financial carrot dangling before them, the family members are more likely to buy into the project.

When getting the family involved, set realistic goals. Plan to plant a modest number of trees each weekend. Don't try to be "Joe Super Treeplanter!" Make it fun. Get the family working together so it doesn't fall on one or two individuals.

A more intensive option that will improve survival and growth of your pines is burn and plant. Planning is important with this option. Have the logger cut all standing brush and leave it scattered over the tract. Have skidder operators scatter logging slash from the loading deck over the tract to increase fuel for burning. Get professional help to use prescribed fire on the harvest area. A properly timed prescribed burn will consume most of the logging debris and help control hardwoods. Plant as in the previous option.

An additional option that is more expensive is to chemically treat the harvested area with herbicides to control the hardwood brush, burn and plant. This option gives the best competition control and can virtually eliminate hardwoods from the site. In terms of expense, this is the most expensive of the three tree planting options. However, it offers the best potential growth.

Another less expensive option for renewing the forest is natural regeneration. It, too, requires advance planning. You will need to leave seed trees (for loblolly

pine, ten per acre) and have the logger use multiple skid trails to expose as much mineral soil as possible. Another option is to cut all the trees in the late fall, just after the pine seed has dropped from the cones. This is called "seed-in place" harvesting. The only problem is, if you don't get a good seed crop, you'll be planting seedlings the following year. Regardless of the method chosen, have the logger cut all the standing brush. If the resulting natural regeneration is too thick, landowners should be encouraged to do a precommercial thin. If they can't afford to hire a contractor, consider another family project to get the job done.

Selective cutting in a stand with multiple age classes or sizes is another option. This is not your Grandpa's selective harvest. In that era, selective harvest meant cut the best and leave the rest. Foresters call this highgrading. This is a no-no! With today's selective harvest, a logger comes in and takes trees from each size or product class. Some large trees, more medium sized trees, and even more pulpwood sized trees are cut. Care is taken to cut only a percentage of the previous ten-years growth. Trees removed are carefully extracted so as not to damage the remaining trees. In a forest with multiple age classes, selective harvests offer the landowner the opportunity to harvest high quality, high value trees while creating openings in the forest to provide for natural regeneration on a ten-year cutting cycle. The downside of this method is it requires a forester experienced in implementing this style of management and a logger skilled in harvesting trees without damaging the remaining stand. ★

Pending Forestry-Related Legislation

Scott Hawkins, Public Information Director, South Carolina Forestry Commission

The forestry community, including the Forestry Commission, is keeping a close eye on some pending legislation. These bills are aimed at strengthening forest industry in the state and maintaining it as the number-one manufacturing sector in our state in terms of numbers of jobs provided and higher-than-average salaries paid. Please contact your local representatives and let them know that, as a South Carolina forest landowner, you support legislation which protects the state's forest resource and your family's investment.

H 4082 –The Property and Firefighter Protection Bill

Introduced by Representative Vick. Other sponsors include Rep. Edge and Rep. Hiott. The bill is currently in Ways and Means Committee waiting to be assigned for a subcommittee hearing. This will provide between \$8 and \$10 million per year in funding to the agency for fire suppression and economic development.

H 3631 & S 501 – The Prescribed Fire Bill

Introduced in the House by Representative Harrison and in the Senate by Senator Cromer. The House bill has been passed by the House as well as Senate Fish, Game and Forestry Committee and is currently on the Senate calendar. We expect it will come up for debate in the Senate in the next three to four weeks. The Senate bill has been passed by the Fish, Game and Forestry Committee. This bill would limit liability for qualified Prescribed Fire Managers in litigation involving smoke-related damages resulting from a prescribed burn.

S 168 – Timber Theft Penalty Bill

Introduced by Senator Shoopman, this bill increases penalties for timber theft from \$500 to \$1,500 if timber value is \$1,000 or less. If value is greater than \$1,000 but less than \$5,000 the penalty will be between \$5,000 and \$10,000 and if the value is greater than \$5,000 the penalty will be between \$10,000 and \$20,000. Bill was amended to increase penalties for repeat offenders in full committee. Currently has passed subcommittee and full committee hearing as amended on January 11, 2012 and is on the Senate calendar.

H 3692 – Heirs Property Bill

Introduced by Representative Robert Brown this bill would allow for the sale of timber on land owned by coheirs and allow for payment to non consenting coheirs. The bill is currently in the House Ag Committee – waiting for a subcommittee hearing.

S 579 – State Forester on Coordinating Council

Introduced by Senator Cromer, this bill would add the State Forester to the Coordinating Council for Economic Development. Current members on council by law are the Secretary of Commerce, Commissioner of Agriculture, Director of Employment and Workforce, Chairman of the State Board for Technical and Comprehensive Education, Director of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, Chairman of the S.C. Ports Authority, Chairman of the S. C. Public Service Authority, Chairman of the S. C. Jobs Economic Development Authority, Director of the Department of Revenue and Chairman of the S. C Research Authority. The bill has just passed the Senate Labor, Commerce and Industry committee and now goes before the full Senate.

If you're unsure who your representatives in the State House are, or you simply need their contact information, visit <http://www.scstatehouse.gov/>. If you have any questions about any forestry legislation, contact the Commission at (803) 896-8820. ★

Long-time, Valued Member of Clemson Extension Forestry & Natural Resources Team Retires

For many years, Clemson Extension Forestry and Natural Resources has been blessed with the assistance of Jeanne Campbell. After almost 32 years with Clemson Extension, Jeanne will retire February 29, 2012. Every organization has that one employee who is the glue holding things together. That one person who is the go-to person when you don't know how it has been done before, when you don't know which person you need to contact or in my case, when I need it to look good and fast! Jeanne has been that person for many of us on the FNR team. I knew when I started at Clemson in 2009 that Jeanne's time was limited, I was just in denial about how soon she would leave us.

We will all miss Jeanne's can-do attitude and her ability to layout publications, newsletters and web pages. I will miss her friendship. Jeanne made this a great place to come to work. I know she will miss us but I also know she will enjoy these beautiful spring days. Soon, she will enjoy her first grandchild. We wish Jeanne the best in her retirement. She will be missed by Clemson Extension. Thank you Jeanne for all your years of support of the FNR faculty and staff. ★

Don't Forget Your Timber Sale Income Counts as Capital Gains Income!

Dr. Tamara Cushing, Assistant Professor & Extension Forestry Specialist, Clemson University

That's right, it is tax time again. I know, you didn't need me to remind you of that. For those of you that had a timber sale in 2011, you will need to report that income on your 2011 tax return. If you had the timber for more than one year, that income will qualify as capital gains income. Now why would that matter? First off, you get a much better tax rate if the income is classified as capital gains. For 2011, the maximum capital gains tax rate is 15% while the ordinary income rate is a maximum of 35%! In addition, income that is classified as capital will not be subject to the self-employment tax. That is an additional tax of 13.3% for 2011! Do I have your attention



yet?? The key here is to make sure you have held the timber for one year. If you received the property as a gift, the holding period is the total time that the donor and donee held the property. If the property was inherited, the holding period is considered met automatically. Failure to report timber sale income as capital gains income can be costly to a landowner. Don't panic if you made this mistake on last year's return. You can go back and amend your return up to three years later. Your 2011 tax return is due April 17th this year (the 15th falls on a Sunday and there is a holiday on the 16th in Washington, DC that is treated as a federal holiday for tax filing purposes). For more information on tax tips for forest landowners, go to http://www.clemson.edu/extension/natural_resources/forestry/tax_tips_2011.pdf. ★

Timber Mart-South

Here is the fourth quarter, 2011 price summary from Timber Mart-South, published by the Warnell School of Forestry and Natural Resources at the University of Georgia. The prices shown are **statewide** ranges of stumpage (standing timber) and the comparison (Up or Down) from the fourth quarter 2010. These prices reflect the average range of stumpage prices reported to Timber Mart-South for the quarter. The price you may receive for your timber can and will vary due to factors such as size of timber, amount, location to mills, access and demand. If you'd like more information on the Timber Mart-South price reporting service, call (706) 542-4756 or visit the website at <http://www.timbermart-south.com>.

Timber Mart-South 4th Quarter, 2011 South Carolina

Pine Sawtimber: \$153-\$214 MBF (per thousand board feet Scribner log scale) (\$20.38-\$28.47/Ton).
Down from 4th quarter 2010.

Pine Chip-N-Saw: \$36.86-\$50.62/Cord (\$13.76-\$18.89/Ton). Down from 4th quarter 2010.

Pine Pulpwood: \$19.75-\$27.62/Cord (\$7.37-\$10.31/Ton). Average slightly up from 4th quarter 2010. ★

About The Forest Steward

Due to budget constraints, we are unable to print and mail copies of the newsletter. However, we will continue to produce an electronic version four times per year in February, May, August and November.

If you would like to receive future issues of The Forest Steward via email, please join our Forestry and Natural Resources List Server. You may also request to receive notices of landowner-oriented educational programs from this list server. To join, go to our website at www.clemson.edu/extension/forestry and click on the link under the Forest Steward banner. You may also access past issues by clicking on the banner itself.

If you have signed up for the list server and have given us your email address, we will email you future editions of the newsletter.

Questions about this newsletter and submissions should be directed to: Editor, Forest Steward Newsletter, Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, School of Agricultural, Forest, and Environmental Sciences, 272 Lehotsky Hall, Clemson, SC 29634-0310. Phone: (864) 656-0878.

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